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ABSTRACT

The California Governor's Teaching Fellowship is a multi-year, statewide initiative designed to recruit more teachers into the profession. It offers competitive, merit-based awards to encourage highly qualified prospective teachers to work in low-performing schools for 4 years after attaining teaching credentials. Administered by California State University, the fellowships provide $20,000 to help pay education and living expenses during enrollment in continuous, full-time, post-baccalaureate teacher education. The impetus for this initiative is rooted in research which consistently shows that teacher quality has more of an impact on student achievement than any other single factor. California data show that schools serving the neediest students are likely to have substantial proportions of underqualified staff. As the student population becomes increasingly diverse, teachers must learn how to effectively serve student needs (through new models of induction and ongoing professional development). In an atmosphere of heightened accountability, there is tension between the public's legitimate need to know and the school's legitimate need to explore its own performance. Data from the first 18 months of the initiative validate its merits. Many of the first group of 250 students have completed their credential programs and are now teaching in low-performing California schools. (SM)

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CALIFORNIA'S INITIATIVE TO ATTRACT HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS INTO LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS

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ED 459 160

SECTION I: CONTENT

A. Statement of the problem:

Across the nation, serious concerns about the supply of qualified teachers flourish. The pressure to recruit more teachers into teaching and provide incentives that encourage staying in the profession is a continuing challenge. The Governor's Teaching Fellowship program, a multi-year statewide initiative, is one of California's most promising incentive programs. These competitive merit-based awards encourage highly qualified prospective teachers to teach in low performing schools in California for four years after attaining their teaching credentials. Administered by the California State University (CSU) as mandated by SB 1666, these fellowships provide $20,000 to help pay education and living expenses while students are enrolled in continuous full-time post baccalaureate study in a California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) accredited California State University (CSU), University of California (UC), or independent college/university teacher preparation (non-intern) program.

Governor Gray Davis and California legislators established the fellowship program. to address the state's teacher shortage The $20 million program is focused on attracting and retaining high quality teachers to assist the state in filling the projected need over the next decade to hire 250,000 to 300,000 new teachers in California. This ongoing source of teacher support is the most attractive financial incentive program in America and will provide well-trained teachers into the most needy schools and meet California's looming teacher shortage.

B. Literature review:

The impetus for this state mandate is rooted in research that has consistently validated that teacher quality has more of an impact on student achievement than any other single factor. Students who have a well-trained, confident teacher at the front of the classroom learn more than those who do not. (Morrow Report, 1999). The widely acclaimed, 1996 blue-ribbon panel's report, What Matters Most: Teaching For America's Future, has been the major blueprint for transforming education so that all children are guaranteed access to high quality teaching. (NCTAF, 1996). Darling-Hammond (1997) states "students in high poverty schools are more likely to have teachers without a license or degree in the

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field they teach. They are also less likely to have teachers with a masters or doctoral degree."

California data shows that teachers who have not earned a full credential are unevenly distributed with schools serving the neediest students and are more likely to have a substantial proportion of under qualified staff. In a 1999 publication of the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning (2000) cites case studies indicating that when inexperienced, under qualified teachers constitute more than about 20% of a school's teacher workforce, it can have detrimental and long-term effects on the entire school community.

Schools are being asked to educate the most diverse group of students to higher academic standards than ever before. Achieving high levels of student understanding requires immensely skillful teaching and schools that are organized to support teachers' continuous learning. Good settings for teacher learning, in both colleges of education and schools, provide immense opportunities for research, testing, and evaluating the results of learning and teaching. There are large numbers of schools of education across the United States, and specifically in California, that have teacher preparation programs that are five–year models for prospective teachers. Extended program graduates are as effective with students as are much more experienced teachers and are more likely to enter and stay in teaching than their peers prepared in traditional four-year baccalaureate programs (Andrew and Schwab 1995, Denton and Peters 1988, Shin 1994).

New models of induction and ongoing professional development for teachers are also occurring nationwide. In California, Beginning Teacher And Support (BTSA) programs are creating successful models of continuous mentoring for beginning and veteran teachers, peer coaching, school-university partnerships and the like. Growing evidence suggests that this kind of professional development not only makes teachers feel better about their practice that will lead to their desire to stay in teaching, but it also reaps learning gains for students in the more challenging learning that new standards demand. (Darling-Hammond 1997).

Recent studies on accountability are the focus of state house and schoolhouse reform. Demands for greater productivity and increased accountability in America's public schools are pervasive. Reform and restructuring efforts have addressed almost every aspect of schooling, and state and federal policy makers are increasingly setting standards and specifying criteria for assessment that schools must meet.

In an atmosphere of heightened accountability, there has been tension between the public's legitimate need to know and a school's legitimate need to explore its own performance. According to Rallis and MacMullen (2000), accountability appears to be public and external rather than a central component of a school's own practice; schools see themselves as "held" accountable, not as "being accountable". Accountability relies on feedback; it links performance with results. Accountability is the foundation of

successful practice because it entails knowing what we do and learning from that knowledge.

The greatest challenge policymakers face in designing better internal and external requirements for accountability is their need to question two prevailing assumptions about school accountability: one assumes that schools are solely responsible for student learning; the other assumes that schools have the capacity to meet high standards if only they have the will to do so. Once accountability is seen as a shared responsibility, policy makers can act to deliver high-quality instruction by asking specifically what schools need and from whom. When accountability is viewed as an issue that involves a school's capacity and its will, policy makers can build appropriate supports and resources into the accountability system. (Rallis and MacMullen, 2000)

In summary, the legislation that has mandated California Senate Bill 1666 and the specific component that addresses the Governor's Teaching Fellowship Program had its impetus from research on teacher quality and schoolhouse accountability.

C. Contribution

With a year and a half of funding prospective teachers, including the process of following preservice teachers through their teacher preparation program and receipt of a credential and monitoring their success in low performing schools in California, the results thus far have validated the merits of California's progressive Governor's initiative.

Subsequent to careful screening of all applicants and work with an GTF Candidate Review Committee appointed by Governor Davis, two hundred and fifty (250) Governor's Teaching Fellowship Award recipients were selected at the end of January, 2001 and another one thousand (1000) fellows were selected in September 2001. Many of the first group of 250 have completed their teacher credential programs, have attained their preliminary credential, and are now teaching in low performing schools across the state of California. The commitment by statute to teach in the most needy schools in California for four years is being monitored by both the CSU-CO program administrators in concert with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. An annual report containing information regarding fellows' status and success over four years will be shared with all California universities as well as other interested state agencies.

D. Conclusions:

The Governor's Teaching Fellowship Program formative report over five years will provide the evidence to support other such statewide efforts to bring the most competent and fully certified teachers to the schools where they are most needed and in turn will advance the teacher quality agenda across the nation. This program emphasizes the importance of the teaching profession and demonstrates the California's Governor's

commitment to serving all of California's K-12 students with well-prepared and high quality teachers.

SECTION II: OUTCOMES AND METHODS

A. Learner/participant outcomes:

The participants will gain knowledge about the model of the Governor's Teaching Fellowship Program as a financial incentive program to provide well-trained teachers into the most needy schools and help meet a daunting teacher shortage in many states.

The participants will gather useful information about the screening and selection process for this merit-based incentive program.

The participants will obtain valuable information about monitoring a statewide effort involving multiple state agencies.

B. Methods

The poster session conducted by CSU-CO program administrators will present the Governor's Teaching Fellowship Program in visual form. Informal interaction and discussion will be fostered.

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